

**Curriculum Leadership of Hong Kong Secondary
School Principals in Times of Reform**

By

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.



*In memory of my father and dedicated to my mother who have given me
endless love and support*

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine the leadership role of secondary school principals in the ten-year curriculum reform in Hong Kong to gain insights into the complexities of curriculum leadership and management in schools. While studies of principal leadership in relation to school reforms and successful quality interventions in education have been quite common, principal leadership during the ten-year reform has barely been studied in Hong Kong.

A purposive sampling technique led to the identification of six principals from different school contexts who had experienced the process of the Hong Kong Curriculum Reform since 2000. Adopting a case study method, the research examined the insights and experiences of principals who were midway through the historical ten-year curriculum reform. Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews, school documents and External School Review Reports by the Government. These data were analysed to generate information pertaining to their understanding of the curriculum reform, their leadership role and their leadership behaviours.

The major finding was that all six principals agreed with the need for education reforms in Hong Kong and accepted that the new curriculum framework was necessary to keep pace with changing social and global trends. All of them adopted a mix of leadership styles in leading the curriculum change in their schools. The leadership strategies they adopted resembled some of the characteristics of effective principals reviewed in the literature, namely: *possess clear vision and strategic planning, create a facilitative environment and culture for change, distribute leadership and develop middle leaders,*

build teacher capacity, build a learning and collaborative community, apply appropriate leadership styles, and seek and provide resources and support. The enabling factors and constraints they identified through the implementation of the reform and their views and experiences relating to their professional development are also reported in the study. Implications for policy, practice and further research are offered.